

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ARAE-00 IO-10 SSO-00 NSCE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9155

INFO USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 422

AMCONSUL BELIZE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MEXICO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY PORT

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 6670

ARA FOR AMBASSADOR MELOY

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR PFOR GT BH UK

SUBJECT: BELIZE DISPUTE: GOG ANNOUNCES ROWLANDS VISIT

REF: A) GUATEMALA 6658 B) LONDON 17848

SUMMARY. BOTH BRITISH AND GUATEMALAN SOURCES HAVE ANNOUNCED
UK UNDER SECRETARY ROWLANDS' VISIT TO BELIZE NOVEMBER 27,

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GUATEMALA NOVEMBER 28, AND MEXICO NOVEMBER 29-DECEMBER 2.

UK CONSUL ASSURES US ROWLANDS WILL GIVE GOG A SPECIFIC SERIES OF BRITISH PROPOSALS FOR NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT AND THAT HE EXPECTS NOTHING MORE FROM GUATEMALA AT THIS POINT EXCEPT PROMISE TO STUDY THEM. OAS SECGEN OFILA IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT GUATEMALA HAS "ALL ROADS OPEN" TO IT TO RAISE BELIZE PROBLEM IN OAS AND THAT INDEPENDENT BELIZE COULD NOT BE MEMBER OF OAS FOR SAME REASON GUYANA CANNOT. END SUMMARY.

1. GUATEMALAN PRESS MORNING NOVEMBER 26 CARRIED THREE STORIES ON TRAVEL PLANS OF EDWARD ROWLANDS, UK UNDER SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. ONE, FRANCE PRESSE WIRE STORY FROM LONDON, SAID FONOFF SPOKESMAN HAD ANNOUNCED ROWLANDS' VISIT TO BELIZE AND MEXICO AND ADDED THAT "IT IS PROBABLE" HE WOULD ALSO VISIT GUATEMALA. PURPOSE OF VISIT TO ALL THREE COUNTRIES WOULD BE TO DISCUSS BELIZE DISPUTE. SECOND STORY, AP FROM LONDON, SAID "INFORMED BRITISH SOURCES" HAD SAID "ROWLANDS WILL PROCEED TO GUATEMALA CITY FOR TALKS ON BELIZE, ON REPORTED GUATEMALAN MILITARY MOVEMENTS NEAR THE COLONIAL FRONTIER AND ON THE RECENT REINFORCEMENT OF BRITAIN'S GARRISON IN THE DISPUTED TERRITORY...FONOFF WOULD NEITHER CONFIRM NOR DENY THE REPORT OF ROWLANDS' VISIT TO GUATEMALA." FONOFF SPOKESMAN REPORTEDLY SAID HE KNEW OF NO PLANS TO WITHDRAW BRITISH REINFORCEMENTS, INCLUDING SPECIFICALLY THE FRIGATE ZULU, BECAUSE "BRITISH TROOPS ARE STILL REQUIRED THERE IN THEIR PRESENT STRENGTH."

2. THIRD STORY WAS INTERVIEW WITH ACTING FONMIN OBIOLS, VERY PROBABLY SOUGHT BY REPORTERS AFTER THEY RECEIVED WIRE SERVICE REPORTS, IN WHICH OBIOLS CONFIRMED ARRIVAL NOVEMBER 28 OF ROWLANDS AND UN PERM REP SIR IVOR RICHARD. OBIOLS SAID "WE WILL LISTEN TO HIM....BUT WE CANNOT ANTICIPATE ABSOLUTELY ANYTHING BECAUSE WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT HE WILL SUGGEST OR PROPOSE."

3. AT LUNCH WITH EMBOFFS PREVIOUS DAY, BRITISH CONSUL HAD INFORMED US OF ROWLANDS' ARRIVAL FRIDAY MORNING NOVEMBER 28, BUT SAID, IN LINE WITH REF B. THAT HMG STILL KEEPING VISIT TO GUATEMALA CONFIDENTIAL IN LINE CONFIDENTIAL

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WITH GOG WISHES. APPARENTLY FONOFF DECIDED OTHERWISE. ASSUMING BRITISH ANNOUNCEMENT WAS SURPRISE TO GOG, THERE WAS CERTAINLY RISK THAT GOG COULD HAVE REACTED ADVERSELY, AND WE ARE PLEASED OBIOLS TOOK CALM AND MATTER-OF-FACT APPROACH. THERE HAS BEEN NO COMMENT SO FAR ON FACT THAT ROWLANDS IS CONTINUING ON TO MEXICO. THAT BRITISH DECISION MUST ALSO BE GALLING TO A GOG THAT RESENTS DEEPLY PRESIDENTE ECHEVERRIA'S

SUDDEN THRUSTING OF HIS COUNTRY INTO THE MIDDLE OF THE DISPUTE.

4. CONSUL MCQUILLAN TOLD EMBOFFS THAT ALTHOUGH HE HAS NOT RPT NOT SEEN ROWLANDS' BRIEF IN DETAIL, HE COULD ASSURE US THAT UNDER SECRETARY WILL BRING A SPECIFIC "PACKAGE" OF PROPOSALS FOR ECONOMIC AND DEFENSE AGREEMENTS THAT COULD FORM PART OF A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT OF THE DISPUTE. CONSUL SAID HE HAD WARNED LONDON NOT TO EXPECT TOO MUCH FROM ROWLANDS' MEETING HERE BEYOND POLITE HEARING BY GOG AND PROMISE TO STUDY PROPOSALS. HMG DID NOT IN ANY EVENT EXPECT RENEWAL OF ACTUAL NEGOTIATIONS UNTIL JANUARY OR FEBRUARY, AND IT WAS POSSIBLE RENEWAL MIGHT BE DELAYED BY GUATEMALAN EFFORT TO LINK THEIR RETURN TO NEGOTIATING TABLE WITH WITHDRAWAL OF BRITISH REINFORCEMENTS. CONSUL IMPLIED UK MIGHT MAKE SOME CONCESSION IN THAT AREA, BUT TOTAL WITHDRAWAL OF REINFORCEMENTS WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE UNLESS GOG ALSO WITHDREW ADDITIONAL (APPROX) 175 SOLDIERS AND NINE ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS IT HAD SENT TO BORDER AREA.

5. EMBOFFS COMMENTED TO MCQUILLAN THAT ROWLANDS VISIT SHOULD CLARIFY AND SIMPLIFY OPTIONS OPEN TO GOG. GUATEMALAN LEADERSHIP WILL REALIZE THAT IF THEY CONTINUE SEEK PEACEFUL SOLUTION, AS PRESIDENT LAUGERUD AND FONMIN MOLINA PREFER, END RESULT WILL BE SETTLEMENT MORE OR LESS ALONG LINES OF ROWLANDS PACKAGE. THEY MAY HOPE TO GET SOME SMALL TERRITORIAL READJUSTMENT AS WELL BUT IT WILL BE CLEAR THAT CHANCES ARE AGAINST THAT. ONLY OTHER OPTION OPEN TO THEM WILL BE MILITARY ACTION. CHOICE MAY BE DELAYED FOR A WHILE, AWAITING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, END OF RAINY SEASON ALONG BELIZE BORDER IN LATE DEC. OR EARLY JAN. BUT DECISION CANNOT BE POSTPONED UNTIL
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END OF LAUGERUD TERM OF OFFICE, AS PREVIOUS PRESIDENTS HAVE PREFERRED, IN VIEW OF MCQUILLAN'S STATEMENT THAT ROWLANDS WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY MAKE CLEAR TO GOG THAT UK IS UNDER PRESSURE FROM BELIZE AND OTHER GOVTS TO INITIATE PROCEDURES LEADING TO INDEPENDENCE, AND THAT WHILE HMG WOULD PREFER NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT WITH GUATEMALA IT CANNOT WAIT FOREVER. MCQUILLAN AGREED WITH THIS ANALYSIS.

6. GUATEMALAN PRESS ALSO CARRIES REPORTS OF PRESS CONFERENCE HELD AT BREAKFAST NOV 25 BY OAS SEC GEN ORFILA. ACCORDING ONE ACCOUNT HE TOLD REPORTERS THAT GUATEMALA HAS "ALL ROADS OPEN" TO IT FOR RAISING BELIZE DISPUTE IN THE OAS AND COMMENTED THAT AN INDEPENDENT BELIZE COULD NOT RPT NOT JOIN OAS BECAUSE IT IS INVOLVED IN TERRITORIAL DISPUTE WITH AN OAS MEMBER, AS IS GUYANA.

ACCORDING TO ANOTHER ACCOUNT, FILED BY GERMAN PRESS AGENCY
DPA, ORFILA, PRESUMABLY IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS, SIMPLY
LISTED AVENUES, INCLUDING CONVOKING MFM AND APPEALING TO
ICJ, WHICH GOG MIGHT HYPOTHETICALLY PURSUE, AND EXPRESSED
HIS HOPE THAT PROBLEM WILL BE RESOLVED BY PEACEFUL MEANS,
TO WHICH OAS IS PREPARED TO CONTRIBUTE IN ANY WAY IT CAN.
ANDREWS

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